





### Up/In:

Here's the BIG BIG BIG Intro. So about a year ago this big ol thang went down at Columbine H.S. in Colorado, which was ofcourse very terrible and ugly all around, and made everybody sad and grave, and all the newscasters had to wear grim faces for about a week and a half, and a whole lotta nice suburban kids got sat down by their parents and asked if they were worried about School Safety. Apparently even if they weren't, their parents were, because all of a sudden politicians, school boards, and administrators started instituting so-called safety measures. This is about when I started reading in newspapers about some seriously sketchy shit and getting really scared and a whole heckuva bit angry. Every single "change" schools across the country were instituting treated the constitution as if it belonged to another nation, or applied exclusively to those over eighteen. (I guess I must have missed section of the bill of rights that explains that minors are not citizens, and therefore do not deserve the freedoms it guarentees.) Because this stuff has been making me increasingly worried and angry, I decided that I wanted to put what I knew and what I could find together in a format that would allow me to share it with other people. So that be the first reason I had for ze zine.

So that's basically the school safetyness. The other thing I wanted to talk about in this zine is the general criminalization of youth, especially poor, black, male youth. In Michigan, some really terrifying stuff is happening, thanks to our "tough on crime" and extremely conservative state reps., and our Guvner, Mr. John Engler (father of triplets). I'll get more into that later on, suffice to say that this zine is going to be focusing largely on Michigan policies and atrocities, because this state is so sickeningly and frighteningly anti-youth, and also because, you know, I live here.

Also, there's:

- Standardized tests in MI, and what's messed up about that all
- Johnny Engler and the Trips
- Youth resistance and protest in A2 (@Huron High School)
- PUNK PRISON, and
- probably some other stuff too. we'll see.

Oh yeah--->big thanks to Sarah Eaton for teaching Protest Art at Community High, which is where i learned about lots of the prlson stuff, (and also for being generally Cajun-style). (If any A2 kids wanna take it in '00/'01, it will be offered 4<sup>th</sup> block at Community as a CR, first semester.)

-Becky Green.

...This zine is sponsored by Predatory Punks and Young Thugs...

Oh yeah→BIG THANKS to Jesa Rae who is the best of the best of every top ten list except for bad top ten lists and did a whole o them graphics and everyone should take her dancing; to Susie Douglass who may or may not gimme some art, but even if she doesn't she is great and awesome and I love her; and to Jean who wrote all the stuff w/her name on it, who is the best revolutionary I know, and who is also my favorite rockstar. They're Cajun-style, man.

To order copies of this zine email me @delerum@aol.com, and I will give the info and the address. Or if you hate me and want to let that anger out, you can do that, too, cuz that's what the internet is for. Or, you know, if you want to send big time letters about the zine, or articles about any o this shit, I might stick em in Predatory #2 if it decides to exist, which it might not.

For more info check out: [www.sentencingproject.org](http://www.sentencingproject.org); [www.cjcj.org](http://www.cjcj.org) (search for School House Hype: Two Years Later. It's the best of the best.); any old newspaper will have madness about the school stuff also, just be a little skeptical about their point of view if you want to get the whole picture; also [www.theinjusticeline.com](http://www.theinjusticeline.com) is slightly sketch, but it's got great links and good stuff, if you're willing to double-check his stories.

\*"Adventures..." "Real Life of John Engler", "MEAPS", "Fear Suffocation" by Jean Wallace

\*back cover by Susie Douglass

\*some art + borders by Jesa Rae



EXIT

But I couldn't. Maybe another zine. Maybe someone else will say it louder and better than I would have (I know people have certainly said it better before). Maybe there's only so much you can fight at one time. Anyway, I tried to provide both sides of every argument (even if I didn't elaborate so much on the other p.o.v.), although, in my mind there is a pretty clear right and wrong to all these things, and obviously all my conclusions sided with what I believe. Basically, I wrote this zine<sup>to</sup> provide some of the information that politicians and the mainstream press overlook, obfuscate, or ignore. I hope that I have been accurate and correct in my use of facts and quotations, and I hope that I've convinced some of yall, or least brought up some things maybe you haven't thought about or heard about.

I guess I should say my sources (sorry, but it's too late and I'm too uncool right now to be seriously formal about this): **Time Magazine** (May 3, 1999; Dec. 6, 1999; April 24, 2000), for zero tolerance stuff and profiling; Many, many editions of the **Detroit Free Press** (definitely April 3, and May 4, 2000), mostly for the punk prison; **The Detroit News** for something (I think punk prison? On May 4, 2000?); **The Justice Policy Institute/Center on Juvenile & Criminal Justice** website; **The Chicago Tribune** (Nov. 20, 1999) for punk prison; Especially, especially, a comprehensive study paper called **School House Hype: Two Years Later**, written by Kim Brooks, Vincent Schiraldi, and Jason Zidenburg for The Justice Policy Institute and the **Children's Law Center**; **The Washington Post** (April 29, 2000) for student profiling. **Education Week** (for parts of the cover) @[www.edweek.org/ew/1999/35teens.h18](http://www.edweek.org/ew/1999/35teens.h18); I think that's it.

# THING → ORDER!

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7. → RANDOM ANTI-YOUTH
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\* EYE → LAST PAGE 4 WHO DID WHAT

# Read This!

**Disclaimer Thingie:** I just want to say, because I think this gets lost a little in my anger at the prison system, that I do understand and believe that (most) of these kid-prisoners have done some really terrible stuff. Some of the murders, rapes, and robberies committed by the inmates are horrifying (though, as I said before, 20% of the inmates are in for non-violent crimes). I am not arguing that they should not be punished at all, simply that the punishment be applied justly and with the situation and age of the accused taken into account during sentencing. Also, I think that the way we "punish" these kids is incredibly inhumane---our (or the govt's) cruelty nearly always exceeds the inhumanity of the convicted teenager's action (even when it doesn't exceed the cruelty of the kid's action, it is unacceptable for our government to sink to the level of those it condemns). Also, the kids I talked about in this zine are not even the ones being most unfairly punished (in general). Even greater victims of our "justice" system are those kids who are locked up in juvenile detention centers for slight crimes that would have been overlooked had they been richer or whiter. Drug users, particularly, I feel are being unfairly sent to detention centers on charges of Intent to sell, which is proven not by actual intent but by amount of illegal substance possessed (which is often surprisingly minute).



## Down/Out:

There is so much more I wanted to say here. I wanted to talk more about kids sent to juvey for things that aren't even crimes. I wanted to talk about how our states, cities, and corporations are able to profit off of the building and operation of prisons, about how every convicted prisoner (usually a black man) is another dollar in their pockets. I wanted to talk about how a new kind of slavery is infiltrating our prison systems, about how prisoners' citizenship is being revoked in one form or another across the country (especially, especially in MI). I wanted to talk about how racism is still here, in a bigger, deeper, scarier way than most white people realize: black boys are expelled from schools at an incredibly disproportionate rate to white boys, often for far lesser actions; 32% of black men are in jail at some point in their lives; almost all the kids charged as adults in Michigan were minorities, and all (I think) the ones sent to adult prisons were black or Hispanic boys and girls. I wanted to talk about how kids expelled from school were in great danger to drugs, poverty, and violent crime, than those allowed an education. I wanted to talk about how thoroughly kids are being silenced in public schools. I wanted to talk about how broad rehabilitation programs are being abandoned at every prison and detention center in the state, about how money is what keeps you out of prison, not innocence, how whiteness is what keeps you off of death row, not repentance. I wanted to talk about how extremely messed up drug crimes are; how the laws are applied only to the poor; how it's not a crime against society.





## In The Beginning

In the beginning nothing happened exactly. I could guess a lot of things: that an awareness overcame the rich and powerful that there was money to be made from building and operating prisons for (against) kids, that youth were simply becoming an easy target for scape-goating, that politicians wanted easy solutions for problems created by the gun industry and a violent american culture. But really there's no way of knowing what started the move to criminalize youth. Certainly the precursor to this was the rise of the adult prison industry /general "tough on crime" legislation & politicians, and also the growing distrust of Americans towards each other. The symptoms were equally clear, as curfews, locker & body searches (by faculty, without notification of parents), and mandatory drug tests came to be acceptable, and as the Supreme Court passed precedent after precedent declaring youth rights to be "necessarily" limited when on school grounds. Then, in Michigan, something big happened. Governor Engler called a press conference to introduce what his administration called a 21-bill "legislative package designed to combat juvenile crime". The Guvner himself said, "these bills put **young thugs** on notice: if you do an adult crime (see article, pg ), you're going to do adult time. For too long, these **predatory punks** have run the streets wreaking havoc in the lives of law-abiding citizens. When enacted, this far-reaching legislative package will make responsibility, deterrence, accountability, and punishment basic components of Michigan's juvenile justice system." Contrary to what Mr. Engler would have you believe, "responsibility, deterrence, accountability, and punishment" have always been components of said system (unless you don't think being arrested, prosecuted, and sent to a severe juvenile rehabilitation center for around seven years,

out. **Nobody can.**" Unfortunately, it's entirely possible that no one is listening. This is, I hate to say it, but far more serious than all nine of the deaths that occurred this year in schools. Those murders were terrible, and should not have happened, but people die every day, and it's never ok; what is at stake here is something far more serious: it is democracy itself. We are being raised a generation that is afraid to fight for its rights, a generation that cares more about getting high SAT scores than its freedom, a generation that doesn't know that the constitution applies to them. **We must recognize our right to free speech, our right to privacy, our right to ownership of those ideas that allow us to be proud of AMERICA for all its faults. We must reclaim our citizenship, and our voices. Because if we don't, in thirty years we will be living in a country with all the controversial parts crossed out of its constitution, and we won't even notice (we won't even care).**





fits those terms. Of course parole was formerly an option...probably had something to do with the word "rehabilitation" and the intrinsic idea of juvenile justice that the punishment should be in the best interest both of society and of the child.)

Some of the bills Engler was talking about were ones to:

-build a privatized prison for youth (see "lockin up the punks" next page).

-give the police authority to detain "truants, runaways, incorrigible youth, curfew violators, and other status offenders"

(I don't know what he means by half that shit, but it sounds pretty unconstitutional to me).

-lower the age of automatic waivers [read: waivers that allow kids to be prosecuted in adult court] to **FOURTEEN**...include "conspiracy/solicitation of serious felonies" (again, vague language that could be manipulated to mean basically anything) as a waivable juvenile offense.

-"authorize juvenile line-ups".

-allow *the prosecutor alone* to waive juveniles to adult court and to request that the child be sentenced as an adult (yes, that means that a biased member of the court could cause a 11-year-old [see the case of Nathaniel Abraham] to be put in prison for the rest of his/her life).

-"allow for the establishment of juvenile boot camps."

-and many more gems which I won't relate because I lost the sheet of paper they were written on. But basically, ditto above: more, deeper, harder, uglier.

And Lo!

That all, of course, was way back to the back to the '95, and now those lovely little changes Engler suggested have been instituted. The reason for his bold (I guess, though

## Why Everything About "School Safety" Is Fucked-Up

The people who so glorify the above measures often say that metal detectors, profiling, locker searches, and the like are responsible for the drop in youth violence since '94 (though, again, this drop was almost certainly caused by economic factors). However some recent studies and surveys have shown this to be unlikely. The Dept. of Special Education at the University of Maryland found that the most orderly and friendly student environments were ones in which the students felt that the rules were fairly applied. On the other hand schools that treated their students like "possible violent actors" (how an official something something I read about in an article I lost suggested that teenagers be seen to ensure safety) tended to create a chaotic and more violent school atmosphere where students felt a much higher level of fear. The authors of the study said, **"creating an unwelcoming, almost jail-like, heavily scrutinized environment may foster the violence and disorder school administrators hope to avoid.** Overall, the model may suggest that less attention should be paid to running schools in an overly restrictive manner and rather, schools should concentrate on communicating individual responsibility to students." A Washington based coalition of police officers, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, takes this a step further. They say (in Time): "1) give kids something to do after school 2) make sure young children have access to quality child care 3) help schools identify troubled kids early and provide counseling 4) prevent child abuse". Jose Garcia, principal of a Florida middle school that fell victim to violence, adds, **"the society outside our schools today means the unbelievable availability of weapons and the reinforcement of the violence culture in the media. No principal can shut that**







will be acting out a sort of (terrible) fantasy, a capacity afforded to them by the powerful (and sometimes overpowering) imagination that kids retain well into adolescence. If such actions were committed by adults under those conditions they would be considered insane. However the rules are different for kids when they commit violent crimes: they are *not* insane, their minds simply do not define reality in the same manner as adults.



kids, and its not because they are not passionate people. They are just not used to having to think about things or feel about things, and it has been rarely in their high school experience that some one, a teacher or other staff member, has really asked them to.

Not a single teacher has signed my anti-gun anti-police petition. Even the most liberal of teachers have told me that they feel that the police officer is necessary to regulate potential disasters. Blinded by the paranoia I have spoken of, these well-meaning employees fail to recognize that the likelihood of violence happening to the kids or staff at our school in their own homes is much more likely than any violence happening in the school. Besides statistics, I believe that an environment of trust and of caring about and knowing students is significantly and desperately more important than the military preparation for disaster which gives us a false sense of security and destroys the trusting environment.

I have learned through some research that in order to get the gun out of Huron High School, because cops are required to carry guns, we will have to get the cop out of Huron High School. With no teacher signatures and few parents, I have a feeling that the petition won't be convincing the administration at Huron or the Ann Arbor Public School administrators, who are the top beaurocrats behind the whole thing. But I will nonetheless hold onto the belief that the intimidating environment created by the police officer should be questioned in every way, and that the Ann Arbor Public Schools should see the percieved "need" to have a police officer in their oversized high schools as a definite need to change and improve the schools themselves, not to punish and control the students.

**WE DON'T NEED POLICE OFFICERS TO KEEP US IN LINE IN HIGH SCHOOL UNTIL WE LEARN THAT WE "NEED" POLICE OFFICERS TO KEEP US IN LINE AND WE DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN GOOD KIDS AND BAD KIDS AND GET THANKFUL THAT A COP IS THERE PROTECTING GOOD FROM BAD AND KEEPING THE SCHOOL UNDER CONTROL WHEN ALL THAT'S OUT OF CONTROL IS OUR UGLY PARANOIA OUR UGLY FEAR OUR UGLY UGLY FEAR AND IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE.**

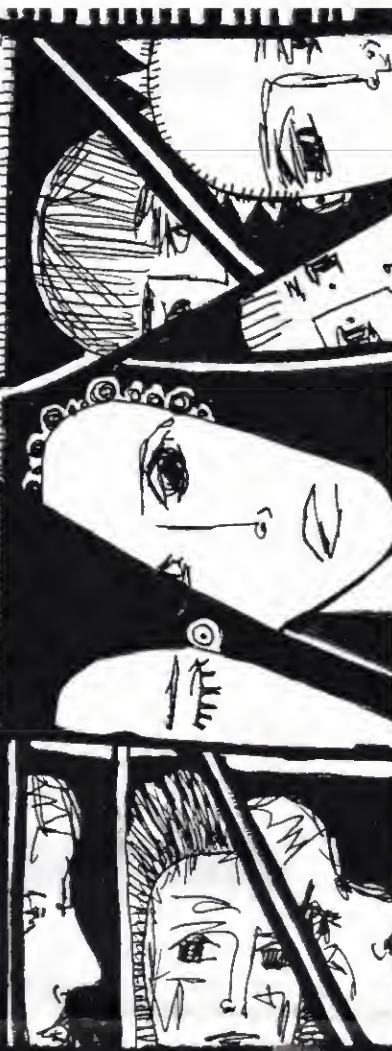
By Jean Wallace





## Adult Crime?

What exactly, Mr. Engler, is an 'adult crime'? Webster's defines adult as "fully mature or grown up", "evidencing the maturity usu. associated with an adult", "evidencing [said] maturity", "designed for or restricted to adults", or, "of or belonging to adults". Clearly the first, second, and third definitions will not work (because, since when does committing assault require such great maturity?). The fourth will also not work: large theft is not designed for *anyone*, people just do it, and crime is restricted to no one, not to adults. The last definition seems at first to work except that clearly murder does not belong exclusively to adults, nor does large theft or assault, (although he is correct in implying that adults are by far the major perpetrators of such crimes) because, truly, anyone is capable of committing such acts, and it does not say anything about their age or maturity to do so. And this was, in fact, the whole point behind prosecuting kids under different rules from adults: an 11-yr-old is NOT the same as a 30 or 40 or 50 yr-old, no matter what (s)he does. A thirteen year-old is a child and cannot be treated as if (s)he has the reasoning capacity, the judgment, or the knowledge of his/her own power (in situations of this magnitude) that someone twice his/her age has.



## The FEAR Suffocation

and the battle against guns and police at Huron High School

I have always felt disturbed by the fact that a police officer patrols Huron High School (as well as the other comprehensive high school in Ann Arbor, Pioneer) full time, carrying a gun in a holster on his hip. On my first day freshman year me and the entire freshman class recieved an introduction and lecture from Officer Purcell, who stood in front of us with his gun hanging on his pants and warned us to behave. A couple months ago I wrote and began to circulate a petition expressing concerns about Officer Purcell's presence in the school, because I feel that its mostly for intimidation that he's here, and asking specifically that he stop carrying a gun to school. Kids should not be treated as potential criminals, but a recently media-popularized paranoia about school violence and violent kids in general has everyone, students, parents, teachers and administrators, convinced that they should.

The attitude of fear of each other is to me one of the most disturbing and dangerous things to see in this high school. Some students, when I explained my petition to them, looked shocked and confused and said things like "well, OK Jean, but I don't want it to be the kid sitting behind me who pulls out a gun and kills us all like those people at Columbine", and, when questioned about how exactly an armed police officer would help that situation, many kids have said that they hoped the cop would shoot the kid with the gun first. Other students, those who've signed the petition, have expressed the same emotions I feel about the cop in our school, asking questions like "why exactly does he need a gun?" and expressing their fear of and displeasure with the connotations of a police officer in the school. Some people seemed never to have thought about the issue at all, which is probably the most disturbing thing for me to see. I have encountered so many blank stares and apathetic "well, OK"s or "no, thank you"s. These are kids who blend into the bleak background of fluorescent lights and brown walls at Huron, easily trained to think nothing, so that they don't feel fear or anger, let alone any more positive kind of passion. The kind of passion that changes things is entirely absent in these

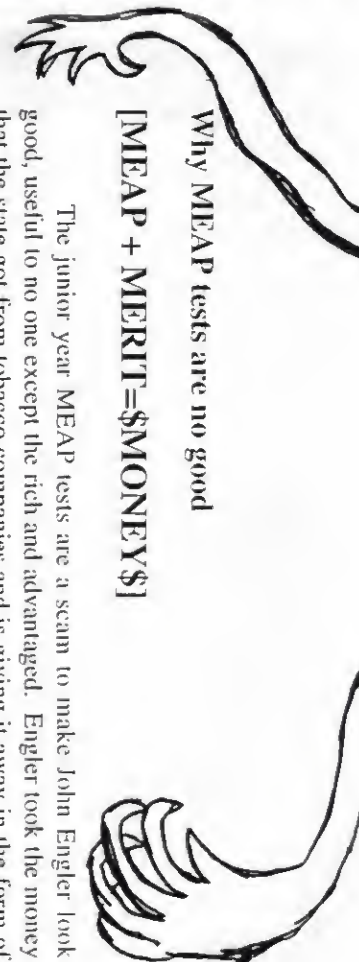


### Why Them Bills Ain't Ok

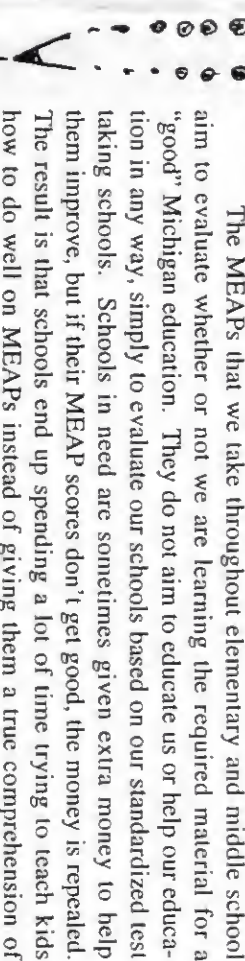
Last November these hot new laws granted a judge the power to sentence an 11-year-old child to jail for life without possibility for parole. The boy was Nathaniel Abraham, an elementary schooler who colored pictures at the defendant table while the trial was playing out. Too young to even be considered capable of giving testimony at any other trial, he was tried as an adult under the automatic waiver law (meaning that because he was accused of first-degree murder, he automatically became a legal adult in the context of his trial). Nathaniel has an emotional disorder, and the "cognitive reasoning abilities of a 6 or 7 year-old", according to the Chicago Tribune, but because the law makes absolutes out of vague and subjective situations, this did not matter. Fortunately for the sake of justice and Nathaniel's future, the judge was a reasonable person who did not ignore his common sense just because the law required him to. Instead he sentenced Nathaniel not to prison but to a detention center until he is 21, at which point he will either be freed or resentenced, depending on what his progress is like. However, this boy could just as easily have ended up with a hard-line, or disinterested judge, one who would have obeyed the letter of the law and treated him exactly as if he were an adult. In which case Nathaniel would have been certain to spend every last second of his life, from 12<sup>th</sup> birthday to 79<sup>th</sup>, within the stone walls and barbed wire icing of prisons.

### Why MEAP tests are no good

[MEAP + MERIT=\$MONEY\$]

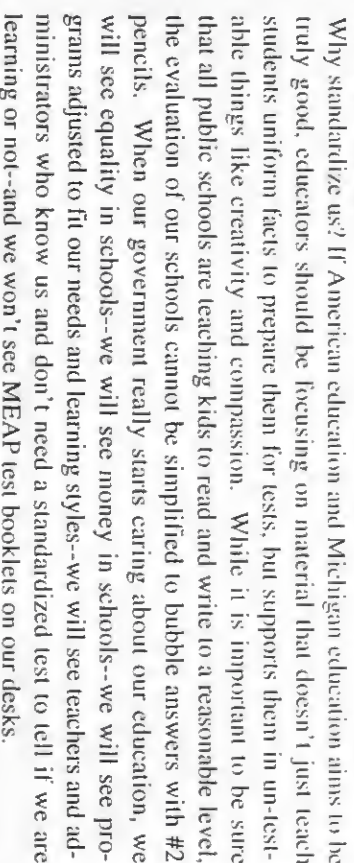


The junior year MEAP tests are a scam to make John Engler look good, useful to no one except the rich and advantaged. Engler took the money that the state got from tobacco companies and is giving it away in the form of college scholarships for students who score high on the MEAPs junior year. However, the people who score high on the MEAP tests tend to be people who go to school in the better school systems of Michigan, which are generally the richer school districts in Michigan (Ann Arbor, for example), which tend to be populated by the more well-off people in Michigan. Hence the MEAP scholarships are just a handout to the rich kids of Michigan who need them the least, while poor people in the unjustly crappy school systems in this state are unprepared for the MEAPs, and don't receive any help from the governor and the tobacco money.



The MEAPs that we take throughout elementary and middle school aim to evaluate whether or not we are learning the required material for a "good" Michigan education. They do not aim to educate us or help our education in any way, simply to evaluate our schools based on our standardized test taking schools. Schools in need are sometimes given extra money to help them improve, but if their MEAP scores don't get good, the money is repealed. The result is that schools end up spending a lot of time trying to teach kids how to do well on MEAPs instead of giving them a true comprehension of material, so that their MEAP scores will impress the state. During all that time preparing for and taking MEAP tests, we could've been learning something of substance . . .

### on standardized tests:



Why standardize us? If American education and Michigan education aims to be truly good, educators should be focusing on material that doesn't just teach students uniform facts to prepare them for tests, but supports them in un-testable things like creativity and compassion. While it is important to be sure that all public schools are teaching kids to read and write to a reasonable level, the evaluation of our schools cannot be simplified to bubble answers with #2 pencils. When our government really starts caring about our education, we will see equality in schools--we will see money in schools--we will see programs adjusted to fit our needs and learning styles--we will see teachers and administrators who know us and don't need a standardized test to tell if we are learning or not--and we won't see MEAP test booklets on our desks.



## Predatory Punks and Young Thugs

our parents, who are we? teachers, politicians, and school administrators. often don't seem to know. John Engler gave us this name (see ride), and we are keeping it. Anyone young can be a part of this. We are in it together...

## REAL LIFE FOR JOHN ENGLER (FATHER OF TRIPLETS)

He's the name to blame in public high schools, middle schools and elementary schools around the state. He's extended the school day and made a certain amount of time in school required for all Michigan schools as a confusing form of "education reform." He's passed and ensured the enforcement of the Weapons=Expulsion rule statewide, a "zero tolerance" policy requiring that any student found with a weapon over three inches long (including a pocket knife or a big lighter) be expelled. He has taken money away from arts programs and taken money away from schools whose students did not make improvements in MEAP test scores over short spans of time. He has increased statewide use of standardized tests to regulate education, and created the program to give away the state tobacco money to rich kids in the form of college scholarships (see article). Now, noting that for all his talk all the credit he's taking for improvement (he talks about making Michigan schools "the best schools in the world"), John Engler has publicly acknowledged that the public schools in Michigan still suck:

**Governor John Engler's three daughters will enroll this fall in a private school in Lansing.**

He says they have thrived at the private preschool program at this Montessori school, and has not apologized or excused himself for his hypocrisy. Engler critics look forward to the day his daughters are put through public schooling in Michigan, but some doubt that the day will ever come.

EVAN WAHNE

## Lockin Up The Young, Untrained, Circus Elephants

(Well, really this is entitled Lockin Up The Punks, but one of the definitions in Webster's for punk is the young, untrained, circus elephant. Um, it's symbolism...or something. Actually someone told me that W. S. Burroughs coined the word punk and that it meant "homosexual sailor who hangs out in parks" which would have been really cool, but not according to the dictionary. Oh well.)

SO, if yall remember that there proposal that John Engler made in '95 (part of his 21-bill legislative package) to construct and operate a privatized youth prison, this is what happened afterwards. Clearly, the package passed and the prison, which Engler had nicknamed "Punk Prison", began construction and opened in July of '99. In a shockingly brutal and shortsighted (cruel and unusual?) move, Engler hired the Wackenhut Corrections Corp. of Florida to run it. The problem there is pretty simple: Wackenhut is a company with a reputation for brutality, mismanagement, and irresponsible administration. According to the Detroit Free Press, "prison violence is nothing new for Wackenhut." "Guards at one of its Texas

prisons were indicted in December on charges of sexually assaulting female inmates, and the U.S. Dept. of Justice recently accused guards at its New Orleans prison of abusing, mistreating and humiliating young inmates."

Not so says Mr. Engler's spokesman, John Truscott. "All I know is that Wackenhut is internationally renowned for how they run their facilities. They're very good at what they do." What exactly Mr. Truscott supposes that Wackenhut does is a mystery, because running humane prisons is assuredly not something they do well at all.

A former, high-up Wackenhut official explains his company's actual position on youth prisons: "in Florida they're called gladiator schools. We're going to take 450 little gladiators, little immature street punks, little

WE DECIDED TO DO A PUPPET SHOW ABOUT STANDARDIZED TESTS AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AS A PROJECT FOR OUR "ART OF PROTEST" CLASS. WHEN WE STARTED TO RESEARCH JOHN ENGLER AND HIS POLICIES ABOUT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, WHAT WE FOUND OUT Predatory Punks and Young Thugs BECAME OF HOW MUCH OF THE CRAP IN THE U.S. IS GETTING PUSHED OVER WHAT IS IT? ONTO THE YOUNG PEOPLE. BECAUSE WE ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE U.S., WE ARE FOR OUR PART OF A MUCH-NEEDED FIGHTING P.R.Y.T. AS JUST THE NAME WE USE FOR OUR PART OF A MUCH-NEEDED MOVEMENT, WHICH IS SMALL BUT GROWING KIDS FROM ALL OVER WILL SOMEDAY BE HEARD, AND SEEN AS MORE THAN "PUNKS" OR "THUGS" OR "BARCODES..."





gangster wannabes who are constant problems, put them all in one place, and if it works out, good, we're brilliant. If it works out bad, we didn't screw it up, privatization did."

Whether or not privatization is at fault, one thing is for sure: things are not working out at the "punk prison".

In the Michigan facility, which is rapidly replacing the Maxey Training School (a more expensive to operate juvenile prison that focuses on rehabilitation rather than meting out godly punishment), about two guards a month have been fired, since its opening, for undisclosed reasons. This prison, officially called the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility, houses young kids, 14-to-19-years-old, and has been notorious since its establishment as a place of horror. Daily, boys are beaten up, sexually assaulted, and/or, entertain (if not act upon) fantasies of suicide. Over twelve inmates [read: kids] in this 450-bed prison have tried to kill themselves in under 8 months, and guards say that it is the most violent place they have ever worked. The original warden quit because she couldn't handle seeing what was happening there every day. In all, the rate of serious violence (assaults, fights, & attempted suicides) exceeds that of the other MI maximum security prisons (adult prisons) threefold.

Why this is happening is pretty obvious. For one thing, the prison is severely inefficiently/under-staffed due to a high turnover rate, the low-budget management style, and guards being forced to work extremely long hours. Some of these guards have also been reported to have baited the

Sledge, the administrator who took the posters from me after lecturing me about obeying the rules, claimed that his secretary lost my posters, while his secretary assured me she had in fact never had the posters.

The past few weeks, I have pushed the poster campaign up a level with the true creation of "Predatory Punks and Young Thugs" (see <sup>see</sup> ~~acth~~). I have made posters with statements about conformity to gender roles in high, posters with quotes on them about freedom, militarization of schools, and draconian rules, posters that define subordination, obedience, insubordination, and disobedience, and encourage kids not to be too subordinate in high school, posters with copies of a school ID card on them encouraging people to insist on having an identity beyond a bar code, and posters with excerpts from the Ann Arbor Public Schools discipline policy. Most of them have been promptly ripped down by school officials, but I haven't heard from any distressed administrators about it yet. Some people ask me about the posters and what they mean, and others understand very clearly and have thanked me for saying what needs to be said. I talked to one girl who read the dictionary definition of insubordination off of a poster, and told me that she hadn't known what it mean and had gotten a lot of detention and referrals for it in the past. Some people have said to me "so, we have all these problems, what are you gonna do about it." My response to that is to explain to them that in order to change the system, you must first have social change, a change in mind set by a lot of people. I think the most I can do, and what I want to do, is to get people to think about their own freedom and to question what our de-personalized education system and conformist high school is offering them. Before it's about laws and rules, it's about feelings and attitudes, and the more people openly express free thinking, the more other people will start to think freely.

shh...





School ID cards are "necessary" in a school of over 2000, because, in the words of some hall monitor "people just wander into the school" and so students need to be able to prove that they are actually students at the school.

Rules about sitting in a hallway or being the library without a pass are blamed on students--when students misbehave, rules must be made to prevent further misbehavior--and evidently it must be rules which are non-adjustable, barely personal, and very general (i.e. no students in the hallways during classes, no matter what they're doing)

It's minor and it's seemingly harmless. It's a game of authority and power, a few immature school officials refusing to use their brains. But from the students in my classes all the way up to the principals of the school, it is clear to me that there is an attitude which is being taught and learned at this high school which is more relevant than just a couple of stupid rules. When authority becomes gratuitous, there just for the sake of authority, students begin to learn that it is not OK to think for themselves. Rules are enforced "just because", in a blatant acceptance of the attitude that kids need rules, even silly pointless rules, in order to be kept "under control". Rules are accepted by kids because if they aren't, there are rules about insubordination and disobedience that they can get in trouble for.

I get tired of the silent acceptance and quiet subordination that is expected of kids. Kids are punished for questioning in school, which is precisely what kids should be rewarded for in a democratic society. I question secretaries, principals, hall monitors, and teachers every time they tell me something that is loaded with the usual crap. Angry about the poster approval rules, I started putting up posters last school year that simply said "Not Approved" real big. This year, after witnessing too much brainless bureaucracy and disrespect of kids in one day, I made posters about the school ID card issue and the impersonal environment at the schools, as well as sarcastic posters mocking school employees who blindly enforce pointless rules and comparing the Huron Administration to George Orwell's "Big Brother", who decides everything for society but never shows his face from the top of the bureaucracy. The posters I put up are routinely ripped down by school employees, and once I even got taken into the office by an outraged teacher and reprimanded for putting them up. I was asked to submit the rest of the posters I was carrying for administrative approval. Not only did that batch of posters not get approved, but they were never returned to me. Mr.

inmates into fights with verbal abuse. Also, the total focus on cost-effective, punishment-based imprisonment at this new facility has led to a frightening situation of overt apathy towards the wellbeing of the boys. Probably the most disturbed young inmate, Jason Wallager (who right wingers love to flaunt as their poster-boy for evil child murderers), receives only ten minutes of psychological counseling every two months. Less mentally ill patients receive even less time with a psychologist, sometimes none at all, which brings up an interesting question: if these young people are supposedly "vicious, senseless person"s, as State Dept. of Corrections Director Bill Martin has described them, then why the fuck aren't they receiving any kind of treatment? The prison, in fact has no counseling programs, not even for the kids who are attempting suicide, or who are being sexually assaulted, and no anger management classes. In the words of Mr. Martin, "if an individual comes to us and wants to be rehabilitated, we have the tools to do it, and we do." Yeah, Bill, how many kids do you *really* expect to come to you and say, "please, rehabilitate me!" Truly, kids who are angry enough to commit violent crimes are unlikely to volunteer to go into therapy. (Of course, it is important to remember that twenty percent of the kids who are charged as adults have only committed crimes against property (like car theft or burglary.) Perhaps, though, the most likely explanation for the level of violence in the "punk prison" is the fact that teenage boys, filled with the energy both of their youth and (often) of their anger, are only allowed outside for 45-minutes a day, in a yard where the only equipment are two footballs, both flat since they hit the barbed wire months ago. That means 45-minutes of exercise and movement in a twenty-four hours of sitting around. Treating any group of young people like this is inhumane (our bodies require a lot, a lot of motion and exercise), but especially to treat kids who are filled with anger and without a method of release, is idiotic, short sighted, and cruel.



The senator who originally helped draft the law that allowed for children to be treated like adults by the hand of the law, William Regenmorter has become deeply disillusioned by that which he helped to wreak. "There was

supposed to be a heavy emphasis on rehabilitation," he said to the Detroit Free Press. "The purpose of the prison was a safe rehabilitative environment..."

Of course, not ALL kids convicted as adults are sent to punkville. Nope, visionary humanitarians like Bill Martin have seen fit to create another living space for these cold-blooded criminals: that's right! In adult prisons! In cells with adults! And, yeah baby, it's even worse than it sounds. In one instance, a 15-year-old boy, imprisoned for nonviolent crime, was locked in a cell with a 20-year-old man who raped him for three consecutive nights. Bill Martin said (to the Free Press) that he didn't see any problem in kids sharing cells with adults. John Truscott (the official voice of Engler) said that it would be wrong to put a child in a cell with an adult. "You send kids into the adult system, they're immediately victimized, sexually for one," he said. "A 15-year-old or 14-year-old should not be in with a 35-year-old, for example," he declared. When he found out about the above incident, he directly contradicted himself, excusing the fact of the rape with the words "we're not dealing with Boy Scouts here."

VanRegenmorter is shocked by such a position. "Frankly, I think that is unacceptable," he said of the policy of locking children up with adults. He is not alone in that sentiment, because in early May the state Senate Judiciary Committee pledged to take action in investigating this practice. VanRegenmorter, who heads the committee, said they would also examine conditions at Engler's pet operation, the "punk prison". Which is good, but does not necessarily mean enough will change. What such a facility really needs are programs that will help the young inmates resolve the anger/violence/whatever that led them to

## Adventures inside a Real Live Public High School (next article)

(something MI Governor John Engler doesn't know about--see

Welcome to Ann Arbor Public Schools' second largest high school, Huron High, home of the Huron River Rats. Here are some scenarios:

- Standing in the library at Huron High School scowling because some librarian is getting ready to kick kids out of the library for not having passes to be there. Moments later I hear this woman actually speak the words "without your school ID card, you don't exist" and send a student away without letting her check out books because she can't prove that she exists or be recorded in the computer without the bar code on her ID card.
- Standing in the office hearing some dimwitted secretary tell you that the rule is that you can put up ten posters, or that your posters couldn't be approved by the administration because they weren't for any school group, or telling you she's sorry the approved ones get ripped down but she can't approve more than ten. Those are just the rules and she's got the green stamp.
- Sitting in the hall doing math homework being interrogated by a hall monitor who wants to know why I'm just sitting in the hall doing math homework, and wants me to do math homework in the library or the cafeteria. When I ask why, they say it's because it's the rule, and lots of kids misbehave in hallways. I point out to them that I'm not misbehaving, I'm doing math homework, but to no avail.

The rule about poster approval at Huron High School (they must be stamped by an administrator before they can be put up, or hall monitors remove them, and only ten of each can be stamped for the 2000-person school) was compared by Mr. Sledge (the 10th grade administrator) to traffic lights--without traffic lights, he explained to me, there would be chaos. But without poster approval there would be... more posters on the wall? Hardly a reasonable comparison to make. In a later conversation with Mr. Sledge during which I questioned his rejection of some posters I wanted to put up advertising a play written by two high school students, he referred me to "downtown", saying that I had to ask "them" why the rule was in place that didn't allow him to approve my posters. When I looked into who exactly "they" were, and actually called "them", everyone that I talked to from the administrative offices had no idea why their poster rules existed, but maintained that they did and must exist.





A nine-year-old was suspended for having a manicure kit with a one-inch knife

- Five (African american) boys were kicked out of a Mississippi school for, while on the school bus, playfully tossing a peanut around that accidentally bounced off the driver's head. The Sheriff was quoted in a newspaper, displaying his apparently mystifyingly sophisticated logic by saying, "this time it was peanuts, but if we don't get a handle on it, next time it will be bodies." The boys were later allowed to return to school (due to a subsequent public uproar), but were forced to voluntarily drop out when no bus service was provided to their rural homes. One boy said to the Children's Law Center, "I [would have] gone to college... Maybe I could have been a lawyer."

- A senior in Atlanta, GA wrote a story in his journal about a school shooting and was arrested. The judge ordered him to leave town. School officials pointed out that the boy was the victim of teasing which made <sup>him</sup> a potential danger.

- A school in Trumbull, CT, where students express an open mistrust of each other, has undercover cops patrolling the hallways

- Four students were kicked out of a school for having Alka-Seltzer in their possession

- A student was expelled from his school for shooting a paperclip and accidentally hitting a school employee

- Random locker searches are legal in many places, as are random drug and bomb searches

- A girl was kicked out of school in Washington for making a gun-shape with a pointed index finger and saying "Bang" jokingly. (Her parents made a ruckus and she was allowed to return)

- A girl was expelled for giving her friend over-the-counter medication for her menstrual cramps



commit crimes in the first place, and that will hopefully help them change and grow, so that they can someday emerge from prison better people than they went in. What these prisoners need are counseling, therapy, anger-management classes, educational opportunities, substance-abuse programs, and art/theater classes (which are notorious for helping violent prisoners re-channel their anger, and learn to express themselves in ways that are both productive and beautiful, and that they can be proud of. Also since prisoners tend to be the dispossessed and muted of society, the poor, black, and male, theater and art arm them with a voice, and give them back the power which are culture has raped them of.) Unfortunately these are exactly the programs that the Michigan government, and many other state governments, are stripping from prisons to save money. Appalling as this is in the case of adult prisons, it is disgusting in the case of youth prisons. Does this mean that we think that fourteen-year-olds who commit armed robbery are damaged goods, who have stained their souls for life? Maybe not, but the effect is the same, because america is abandoning its bad children (its black children) in torture chambers, in hopeless futures, in dark spaces. And, man, it's NOT okay.





# Am I you?

Justice Antonin Scalia in his 1995 decision to allow drug testing of students: "Minors lack some of the most fundamental rights of self-determination—including even the right of liberty in its narrow sense, i.e., the right to come and go at will."

Hey Mr. Scalia, how does that justify limiting the broader rights of youth, such as freedom of speech and the right to privacy? Ya jerk.

some stats from [www.sentencingproject.org](http://www.sentencingproject.org):

Almost one in three (32%) young black males in the age group 20-29 is under some type of correctional control (incarceration, probation, or parole), as is 1 in 15 young white males and 1 in 8 young Hispanic males. A report issued by Amnesty International in 1998, based on data from the Department of Justice and from individual states, estimates that as many as 200,000 youth under the age of eighteen are prosecuted in criminal court annually, an estimated 180,000 of those in 13 states which have set the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction at 15 or 16 rather than 18.2

In 1996, more than half the [juvenile] cases waived to [adult] criminal court were non-violent drug or property offenses:

- 14% drugs
- 6% public order.
- 67% of juvenile defendants in adult court are black.

## Zero Tolerance

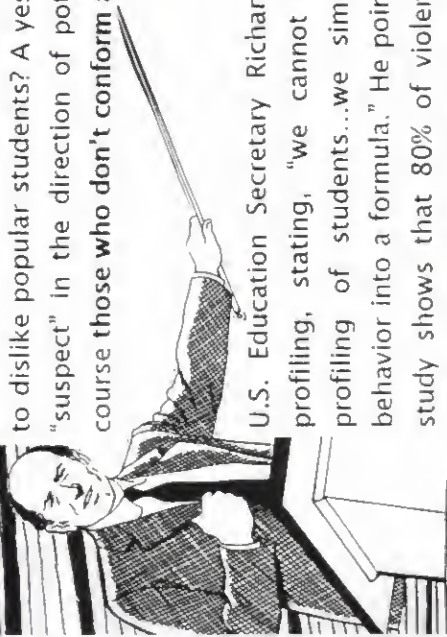
Yup, it's scary, it's bad, it's ugly. And it kinda smells. It's zero tolerance. First of all, the words "zero tolerance" should not sound good to anyone. We preach tolerance to little children, and the bible that the vast majority of our country claims to adhere to has it as its central theme. Tolerance is good, it means being understanding, sympathetic, flexible. These should all be qualities valued in school officials, not scorned. But they are scorned: by principals, security "experts" (more often consulted in cases of school violence prevention than child psychologists, who are the real experts on students, besides students themselves.), politicians. In schools nationwide things are happening that the constitution was designed to prevent. Things are happening that George Orwell warned us about in 1984. Some things, thanks to Zero Tolerance and its cousins (one of which is weapons = expulsion, Michigan's policy):

- random kids are frisked with a metal detector wand as they enter their schools
- kids are kicked out of Granite City, Illinois schools for "cursing, mood-swings, writing about "the dark side of life"
- cameras are appearing everywhere. Big Brother is Watching.
- A middle school in Florida was not alone when it led 600 11-14 year old children in a lockdown drill
- Two ten year olds were arrested and taken to court for putting liquid hand soap in their teacher's water bottle. The charges were for attempted murder.



It suggests that a student who questions is dangerous; you should not trust the student critical of school policy, (s)he is disturbed, is a potential threat. This is very, very scary because it takes away a student's power to openly acknowledge what is happening in schools today.

The FBI uses an even more frightening system, called the "offender profile", which it has distributed to schools across the country, and which was created similarly to Mosaic-2000. It asks the question, does the student seem to dislike popular students? A yes to this would nudge the "suspect" in the direction of potential killer, because, of course **those who don't conform are dangerous.**



U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley opposes student profiling, stating, "we cannot rely on the mechanical profiling of students...we simply cannot put student behavior into a formula." He points out that a U of Oregon study shows that 80% of violence can be prevented by schools if they promote compassion, discipline, and the peaceful resolution of disputes (kind of a no-brainer, really). This goes against the inadvertent action that thousands and thousands of schools are taking: creating a cold environment of distrust, fear, paranoia, and isolation. Students at schools with such policies often buy fully into the anti-student propaganda, each one fearing that the other is gonna pull out a gun and blow away the class of 2002 in fifteen seconds. Even at schools without hardcore Zero Tolerance, student profiling programs, you can see the mistrust, the whose-it-gonna-be: Maybe that scary reject-kid who sits behind you in math, and wears a different Skinny Puppy t-shirt every day. Maybe one of those wannabe gangsta black guys, wearing a stocking over his hair, and talking like Tupac. Maybe even the normal kid, the one who wears Abercrombie, but who never quite fit in. Maybe you. Maybe me.

77% of juveniles sent to adult prison are minorities (60% black, 15% Hispanic, 1% American Indian, 1% Asian).

In June 1998, more than 6,500 juveniles were held in adult jails either tried or awaiting trial as adults.

The 36 states supplying data to the National Corrections Reporting Program report that juveniles accounted for 5,600

(2%) of new court commitments to state adult prisons in 1996.

Of 15,620 youth under the age of 19 serving sentences in adult prisons at the end of 1997, 1,484 were under age 16.

Children in adult correctional facilities suffer higher rates of physical and sexual abuse and suicide. Compared to those held in juvenile detention centers, youth held in adult jails are:

- 7.7 times more likely to commit suicide
- 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted
- Twice as likely to be beaten by staff
- 50% more likely to be attacked with a weapon.



### Kids Under Suspicion

Last year Columbine and other high profile school shootings brought the nation's attention to the problem of rising violence in america's schools. At least, this is what the nightly news and mainstream media would let you believe. Unfortunately they have lied to you. They say this because it's sensational, and because it pulls at the emotions of their audience, making them think, "what if it were my kid, or my kid's school?" In fact, though, schools are getting *more* safe, not less, as the level of violence within them has followed the pattern of general youth crime in declining steadily since the 1993/1994 school year. According to the National School Safety Center, in the much-hyped year of Columbine, the chances of being killed in school were one in two million (~.0000005%). (you guessed it-- you're more than twice as likely to be struck by lightning). With 52 million students in all the country, this is a miniscule chance; that same year there were only 26 deaths in schools (obviously, if you do the math), making school one of the safest places for kids to be. Between 1993 and 1997 there was a 25% (to 5.9%) decrease in kids taking guns to school, and student/teacher polls are reflecting this change. "The 1998 survey, which was done six months after the string of five highly publicized school shootings, showed that (nearly twice as many) teachers (11% to 21%), twice as many students (13% to 29%) and three times as many law enforcement officials (8% to 26%) reported that violence in their schools had declined from the previous year." (Brooks, Schiraldi, and Ziedenberg) Overall, around 90% of all them said that violence had either decreased or stayed the same. Some people aware of these statistics still think that such downturns don't represent suburban violence (no wonder, since the media routinely and casually lies by saying there has been an explosion of suburban violence), but in reality, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics, it is much, much more dangerous (yep, still) to be a teenager in urban areas than suburban or rural ones. Parents are still consumed by fear for their children's lives, though, largely because they are not being supplied with accurate

information, and equally misinformed school officials are still consumed by fear of lawsuits. Because of this a broad range of "safety measures" are being instituted nationwide (of course many of the more frightening changes, such as zero tolerance, began earlier in this decade), water for a fire that never existed in the first place. Actually, though, the changes being made schools, parading as simple safety measures, are the most potentially dangerous actions that have been taken against kids possibly in the history of our country.

### Student Profiling

Student profiling is some of the sketchiest of the sketchy shit. It makes my toes curl up in my shoes, and causes small animals to whimper. It goes like this: A teacher sees what he or she has been told could be dangerous behavior. Something like a drawing depicting any kind of violence (yes, a picture of a gun would qualify, as would a really angry drawing, or a picture of someone holding a knife, or of someone bleeding, etc.), or a threat (this includes "I'm gonna kill ----", "I'm gonna hurt ----", or any other empty violent expression that kids have been using for years out of general and insincere anger) (man, if i could count the number of times i've said i was going to kill my history teacher, i definitely wouldn't have a D+ in math). Also considered suspect would be any incidence of physical fighting. After this discovery, the teacher would then go to a police officer who would evaluate the so-called potential danger of the child. The police officer does this by answering questions about the student with a computer program called Mosaic-2000. (This program "works", if you can call it that, because it contains unrelated and superficial information about specific school shooters, info that displays not symptoms of violence, but personality traits.) It asks questions like: has the student recently experienced rejection? has the student been harassed by peers? What is the student's demeanor toward authority figures? This is perhaps the most frightening question in the whole of the spectrum of student "threat assessment" (the PD's euphemism for profiling) programs.